

THE

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## DIVINITY.

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### EVIDENCES OF THE TRUTH OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

*Extracted from the new Edinburgh Encyclopædia.*

(Continued from page 89.)

34. If it were possible to summon up to the presence of the mind, the whole mass of spoken testimony, it would be found that what was false bore a very small proportion to what was true. For many obvious reasons, the proportion of the false to the true must be also small in written testimony. Yet instances of falsehood occur in both; and the actual ability to separate the false from the true, in written history, proves that historical evidence has its principles and its probabilities to go upon.—There may be the natural signs of dishonesty. There may be the wildness and improbability of the narrative. There may be a total want of agreement on the part of other documents.—There may be the silence of every auth<sup>r</sup> for ages after the pretended date of the manuscript in question. There may be all these, in sufficient abundance, to convict the manuscript of forgery and falsehood. This has actually been done in several instances. The skill and discernment of the human mind upon the subject of historical evidence have been improved by the exercise. The few cases in which sentence of condemnation has been given, are so many testimonies to the competency of the tribunal which has sat in judgment over them, and give a stability to their verdict, when any document is approven of. It is a peculiar subject, and the men who stand at a distance from

it may multiply their suspicions and their scepticism at pleasure ; but no intelligent man ever entered into the details, without feeling the most familiar and satisfying conviction of that credit and confidence, which it is in the power of historical evidence to bestow.

35. Now, to apply this to the object of our present division, which is to ascertain the age of the documents, and the person who is the author of it. These are points of information which may be collected from the performance itself. They may be found in the body of the composition, or they may be more formally announced in the title-page—and every time that the book is referred to by its title, or the name of the author and age of the publication are announced in any other document that has come down to us, these points of information receive additional proof from the testimony of subsequent writers.

36. The New Testament is bound up in one volume, but we would be underrating its evidence if we regarded it only as one testimony, and that the truth of the facts recorded in it rested upon the testimony of one historian. It is not one publication, but a collection of several publications, which are ascribed to different authors, and made their first appearance in different parts of the world. To fix the date of their appearance, it is necessary to institute a separate enquiry for each publication ; and it is the unexcepted testimony of all subsequent writers, that two of the gospels, and several of the epistles, were written by the immediate disciples of our Saviour, and published in their lifetime. Celsus, an enemy of the Christian faith, refers to the affairs of Jesus as written by his disciples. He never thinks of disputing the fact ; and from the extracts which he makes for the purpose of criticism, there can be no doubt in the mind of the reader, that it is one or other of the four gospels to which he refers. The single testimony of Celsus may be considered as decisive of the fact, that the story of Jesus and of his life was actually written by his disciples. Celsus writes about a hundred years after the alleged time of the publication of this story ; but that it was written by the companions of this Jesus, is a fact which he never thinks of disputing. He takes it up upon the strength of its general notoriety, and the whole history of that period furnishes nothing that can attach any doubt or suspicion to this circumstance. Referring to a principle already taken notice of, had it been the history of a philosopher instead

of a prophet, its authenticity would have been admitted without any formal testimony to that effect. It would have been admitted, so to speak, upon the mere existence of the title-page, combined with this circumstance, that the whole course of history or tradition does not furnish us with a single fact, leading us to believe that the correctness of this title-page was ever questioned. It would have been admitted, not because it was asserted by subsequent writers, but because they made no assertion upon the subject, because they never thought of converting it into a matter of discussion, and because their occasional references to the book in question would be looked upon as carrying in them a tacit acknowledgment, that it was the very same book which it professed to be at the present day. The distinct assertion of Celsus, that the pieces in question were written by the companions of Jesus, though even at the distance of one hundred years, is an argument in favour of their authenticity which cannot be alleged for many of the most esteemed compositions of antiquity. It is the addition of a formal testimony to that kind of general evidence, which is founded upon the tacit or implied concurrence of subsequent writers, and which is held to be perfectly decisive in similar cases.

37. Had the pieces which make up the New Testament been the only documents of past times, the mere existence of a pretension to such an age, and to such an author, resting on their own information, would have been sustained as a certain degree of evidence that the real age and the real author had been assigned to them. But we have the testimony of subsequent authors to the same effect; and it is to be remarked, that it is by far the most crowded, and the most closely sustained series of testimonies, of which we have any example in the whole field of ancient history. When we assigned the testimony of Celsus, it is not to be supposed that this is the very first which occurs after the days of the apostles. The blank of a hundred years betwixt the publication of the original story and the publication of Celsus, is filled up by antecedent testimonies, which, in all fairness should be counted more decisive of the point in question. They are the testimonies of Christian writers, and, in as far as a nearer opportunity of obtaining correct information is concerned, they should be held more valuable than the testimony of Celsus. In some cases, their reference to the books of the New Testament is made in the form of an express quotation, and the

author particularly named. In other cases, the quotation is made without reference to the particular author, and ushered in by the general words, "*as it is written.*" And besides, there are innumerable allusions to the different parts of the New Testament, scattered over all the writings of the earlier fathers. In this last case, there is no express citation; but we have the sentiment, the term of expression, the very words of the New Testament repeated so often, and by such a number of different writers, as to leave no doubt upon the mind, that they were copied from one common original, which was at that period held in high reverence and estimation. In pursuing the train of references, we do not meet with a single chasm from the days of the original writers. Not to repeat what we have already made some allusion to, the testimonies of the original writers to one another, we proceed to assert, that some of the fathers, whose writings have come down to us, were the companions of the apostles, and are even named in the books of the New Testament. St. Clement, bishop of Rome, is, with the concurrence of all ancient authors, the same whom Paul mentions in his epistle to the Philippians. In his epistle to the church of Corinth, which was written in the name of the whole church of Rome, he refers to the first epistle of Paul to the former church. "Take into your hands the epistle of the blessed Paul the apostle."—He then makes a quotation which is to be found in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. Could Clement have done this to the Corinthians themselves had no such epistle been in existence? And is not this an undoubted testimony not merely from the mouth of Clement, but on the part of the churches both of Rome and Corinth, to the authenticity of such an epistle? There are in this same epistle of Clement, several quotations of the second kind, which confirm the existence of some other books of the New Testament; and a multitude of allusions or references of the third kind, to the writings of the evangelists, the Acts of the Apostles, and a great many of these epistles which have been admitted into the New Testament. We have similar testimonies from some more of the fathers, who lived and conversed with Jesus Christ. Besides many references of the second and third kind, we have also other instances of the same kind of testimony which Clement gave to St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, than which nothing can be conceived more indisputable. Ignatius, writing to the church of Ephesus, takes

notice of St. Paul's epistle to that church ; and Polycarp, an immediate disciple of the apostles, makes the same express reference to St. Paul's epistle to the Philippians, in a letter addressed to that people. In carrying our attention down from the apostolical fathers, we follow an uninterrupted series of testimonies to the authenticity of the canonical scriptures. They get more numerous and circumstantial as we proceed,—a thing to be expected from the progress of Christianity, and the greater multitude of writers, who come forward in its defence and illustration.

38. In pursuing the series of writers, from the days of the apostles down to about one hundred and fifty years after the publication of the pieces which make up the New Testament, we come to Tertullian, of whom Lardner says, "that there are perhaps more and longer quotations of the small volume of the New Testament in this one Christian author, than of all the works of Cicero, though of so uncommon excellence for thought and style, in the writers of all characters for several ages."

39. We feel ourselves exposed in this part of our investigation, to the suspicion which adheres to every Christian testimony. We have already made some attempts to analyse that suspicion and its ingredients, and we conceive, that the circumstance of the Christians being an interested party, is only one, and not perhaps the principal of these ingredients. At all events, this may be the proper place for disposing of that one ingredient, and for offering a few general observations on the strength of the Christian testimony.

40. In estimating the value of any testimony, there are two distinct subjects of consideration ; the person who gives the testimony, and the people to whom the testimony is addressed. It is quite needless to enlarge on the resources which, in the present instance, we derive from both these considerations, and how much each of them contributes to the triumph and solidity of the Christian argument. In as far as the people who give the testimony are concerned, how could they be mistaken in their account of the books of the New Testament, when some of them lived in the same age with the original writers, and were their intimate acquaintances, and when all of them had the benefit of an uncontrolled series of evidence, reaching down from the date of the earliest publications to their own times ? Or, how can we suspect that they falsified, when there runs through their writings

the same tone of plainness and sincerity, which is allowed to stamp the character of authenticity on other productions ; and, above all, when, upon the strength even of heathen testimony, we conclude that many of them, by their sufferings and death, gave the highest evidence that man can give, of his speaking under the influence of a real and honest conviction ? In as far as the people who received the testimony are concerned, to what other circumstances can we ascribe their concurrence, but to the truth of that testimony ? In what way was it possible to deceive them upon a point of general notoriety ? The books of the New Testament are referred to by the ancient fathers, as writings generally known and respected by the Christians of that period. If they were obscure writings, or had no existence at the time, how can we account for the credit and authority of those fathers who appealed to them, and had the effrontery to insult their fellow Christians by a falsehood so palpable, and so easily detected ? Allow them to be capable of this treachery, we have still to explain how the people came to be the dupes of so glaring an imposition ; how they could be permitted to give up every thing for a religion, whose teachers were so unprincipled as to deceive them, and so unwise as to commit themselves upon ground where it was impossible to elude discovery.— Could Clement have dared to refer the people of Corinth to an epistle said to be received by themselves, and which had no existence ? or, could he have referred the Christians at large to writings which they never heard of ? And it was not enough to maintain the semblance of truth with the people of their own party. Where were the Jews all the time ? and how was it possible to escape the correction of these keen and vigilant observers ? We mistake the matter much, if we think, that Christianity at that time was making its insidious way in silence and in secrecy, through a listless and unconcerned public. All history gives an opposite representation. The passions and curiosity of men were quite upon the alert. The popular enthusiasm had been excited on both sides of the question. It had drawn the attention of the established authorities in different provinces of the empire, and the merits of the Christian cause had become a matter of frequent and formal discussion in courts of judicature. If, in these circumstances, the Christian writers had the hardihood to venture upon a falsehood, it would have been upon safer ground than what they naturally adopted. They would never

have hazarded to assert what was so open to contradiction, as the existence of books held in reverence among all the churches, and which yet nobody either in or out of these churches ever heard of. They would never have been so unwise as to commit in this way a cause, which had not a single circumstance to recommend it but its truth and its evidences.

41. The falsehood of the Christian testimony on this point, carries along with it a concurrence of circumstances, each of which is the strangest and most unprecedented that ever was heard of. First, That men, who sustained in their writings all the characters of sincerity, and many of whom submitted to martyrdom, as the highest pledge of sincerity which can possibly be given, should have been capable of falsehood at all.— Second, That this tendency to falsehood should have been exercised so unwisely, as to appear in an assertion perfectly open to detection, and which could be so readily converted to the discredit of that religion, which it was the favourite ambition of their lives to promote and establish in the world. Third, That this testimony could have gained the concurrence of the people to whom it was addressed, and that, with their eyes perfectly open to its falsehood, they should be ready to make the sacrifice of life and of fortune in supporting it. Fourth, That this testimony should never have been contradicted, by the Jews, and that they should have neglected so effectual an opportunity of disgracing a religion, the progress of which they contemplated with so much jealousy and alarm. Add to this, that it is not the testimony of one writer, which we are making to pass through the ordeal of so many difficulties. It is the testimony of many writers, who lived at different times, and in different countries, and who add the very singular circumstance of their entire agreement with one another, to the other circumstances equally unaccountable, which we have just now enumerated. The falsehood of their united testimony is not to be conceived. It is a supposition which we are warranted to condemn, upon the strength of any one of the above improbabilities taken separately. But the fair way of estimating their effect upon the argument, is to take them jointly, and, in the language of the doctrine of chances, to take the product of all the improbabilities into one another. The argument which this product furnishes for the truth of the Christian testimony, has, in strength and

conclusiveness, no parallel in the whole compass of ancient literature.

42. The testimony of Celsus is looked upon as peculiarly valuable, because it is disinterested. But if this consideration gives so much weight to the testimony of Celsus, why should so much doubt and suspicion annex to the testimony of Christian writers, several of whom, before his time, have given a fuller and more express testimony to the authenticity of the gospels? In the persecutions they sustained; in the obvious tone of sincerity and honesty which runs through their writings; in their general agreement upon this subject; in the multitude of their followers, who never could have confided in men that ventured to commit themselves, by the assertion of what was obviously and notoriously false; in the check which the vigilance, both of Jews and Heathens exercised over every Christian writer of that period; in all these circumstances, they give every evidence of having delivered a fair and unpolluted testimony.

43. II. We shall now look into the New Testament itself, and endeavour to lay before the reader the internal marks of truth and honesty, which are to be found in it.

44. Under this head, it may be right to insist upon the minute accuracy, which runs through all its allusions to the existing manners and circumstances of the times. To appreciate the force of this argument, it would be right to attend to the peculiar situation of Judea, at the time of our Saviour. It was then under the dominion of the Roman emperors, and comes frequently under the notice of the profane historians of that period. From this source we derive a great variety of information, as to the manner in which the emperors conducted the government of their different provinces; what degree of indulgence was allowed to the religious opinions of the people, whom they held in subjection; in how far they were suffered to live under the administration of their own laws; the power which was vested in the presidents of provinces; and a number of other circumstances relative to the criminal and civil jurisprudence of that period. In this way there is a great number of different points in which the historians of the New Testament can be brought into comparison with the secular historians of the age. The history of Christ and his apostles contains innumerable references to the state of public affairs. It is not the history of obscure and unnoticed individuals. They had attracted much of the public

attention. They had been before the governors of the country. They had passed through the established forms of justice ; and some of them underwent the trial and punishment of the times. It is easy to perceive, then, that the New Testament writers were led to allude to a number of these circumstances in the political history and constitution of the times, which came under the cognizance of ordinary historians. This was delicate ground for an inventor to tread upon ; and particularly, if he lived at an age subsequent to the time of his history. He might in this case have fabricated a tale, by confining himself to the obscure and familiar incidents of private history ; but it is only for a true and a cotemporary historian, to sustain a continued accuracy, through his minute and numerous allusions to the public policy and government of the times.

(To be continued.)

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EXTRACT FROM BEATTIE'S ESSAY ON TRUTH.

FATALISTS are fond of inferring moral necessity from physical, in the way of analogy. But some of their arguments on this topic are most ridiculously absurd. "There is," says Voltaire's *Ignorant Philosopher*, "nothing without a cause. An effect without a cause, are words without meaning. Every time I have a will, this can only be in consequence of my judgment good or bad ; this judgment is necessary ; therefore so is my will." All this hath been said by others : but what follows, is, I believe, peculiar to the *Ignorant Philosopher*. "In effect," continues he, "it would be very singular, that all nature, all the planets, should obey eternal laws, and that there should be a little animal, five feet high, who, in contempt of these laws, could act as he pleased, solely, according to his caprice." Singular! aye, singular indeed. So very singular, that yours, Sir, if I mistake not, is the first human brain that conceived such a notion. If man be free, no body ever conceived, that he made himself so in contempt of the laws of nature ; it is in consequence of a law of nature, that he is a free agent. But passing this, let us attend to the reasoning. The planets are not free agents ;—therefore it would be very singular that man should be one. Not a whit more singular, than that this same animal of five feet should perceive,

and think, and read, and write, and speak ; attributes, which no astronomer of my acquaintance has ever supposed to belong to the planets, notwithstanding their brilliant appearance, and stupendous magnitude. We do too much honour to such reasoning, when we reply to it in the bold, but sublime words of a great genius :

“ Know’st thou th’ importance of a soul immortal ?  
Behold this midnight glory, worlds on worlds !  
Amazing pomp ! redouble this amaze ;  
Ten thousand add : and twice ten thousand more ;  
Then weigh the whole ; ONE SOUL outweighs them all,  
And calls th’ astonishing magnificence  
Of unintelligent creation, poor.”

Some fatalists deny, that our internal feelings are in favour of moral liberty. “ It is true,” says a worthy and ingenious author, “ that a man by internal feeling, may prove his own free will, if by free-will be meant the power of doing what a man wills or desires ; or of resisting the motives of sensuality, ambition, &c. that is free-will in a popular sense. Every person may easily recollect instances, where he has done these several things. But these are entirely foreign to the present question. To prove that a man has free-will in the sense opposite to mechanism, he ought to feel that he can do different things, while the motives remain exactly the same. And here I apprehend the internal feelings are entirely against free-will, where the motives are of a sufficient magnitude to be evident : where they are not, nothing can be proved.” (Hartley.) Questions of this kind would be more easily solved, if authors would explain their doctrine by examples. When this is not done, we cannot always be sure that we understand their meaning, especially in abstract subjects ; where language, after all our care, is often equivocal and inadequate. If I rightly understand this author, and am allowed to examine his principles by my own experience, I must conclude that he very much mistakes the fact. Let us take an example. A man is tempted to the commission of a crime : his motive to commit it, is the love of money, or the gratification of appetite : his motive to abstain, is a regard to duty or to reputation. Suppose him to weigh these motives in his mind, for an hour, a day, or a week : and suppose, that during this space, no additional consideration

occurs to him on either side : which, I think, may be supposed, because I know it is possible, and I believe often happens.— While his mind is in this state, the motives remain precisely the same ; and yet it is to me inconceivable, that he should at any time, during this space, feel himself under a necessity of committing, or under a necessity of not committing the crime. He is indeed under a necessity either to do or not to do : but every man in such a case, feels that he has it in his power to choose the one or the other.

Again : suppose two men in the circumstances above-mentioned, to yield to the temptation, and to be differently affected by a review of their conduct ; the one repining at fortune, or fate, or providence, for having placed him in too tempting a situation, and solicited him by motives too powerful to be resisted ; the other blaming and upbraiding himself for yielding to the bad motive, and resisting the good. I would ask, which of these two kinds of remorse or regret is the most rational ? The first, according to the doctrine of the fatalists ; the last, according to the universal opinion of mankind. No divine, no moralist, no man of sense, ever supposes true penitence to begin, till the criminal becomes conscious, that he has done or neglected something which he ought not to have done or neglected ; a sentiment which would be not only absurd, but impossible, if all criminals and guilty persons believed, from internal feeling, that what is done could not have been prevented. Whenever you can satisfy a man of this, he may continue to bewail himself, or repine at fortune, but his repentance is at an end. It is always a part of the language of remorse, “ I wish the deed had never been done : wretch that I was, not to resist the temptation.” Does this imply, that the penitent supposes himself to have been under a necessity of committing the action, and that his conduct could not possibly have been different from what it is ? To me, it seems to imply just the contrary. And am not I a competent judge of this matter ? Has not this been often the language of my soul ? And will any man pretend to say, that I do not understand my own thoughts, or that he knows them better than I ? All men, indeed, have but too frequent experience of at least this part of repentance ; then why multiply words, when by facts it is easy to determine the controversy ?

I have conversed with many people of sense on the subject of this controversy, concerning liberty and necessity. To the great-

er part, the arguments of Clarke and others, in vindication of liberty, seemed quite satisfying; others owned themselves puzzled with the subtilties of those, who took the opposite side of the question; some reposed full confidence on that consciousness of liberty which every man feels in his own breast: in a word, as far as my experience goes, I have found all the impartial, the most sagacious and virtuous part of mankind, enemies to fatality in their hearts; willing to consider the arguments for it as rather specious than solid; and disposed to receive, with joy and thankfulness, a thorough vindication of human liberty, and a logical confutation of the opposite doctrine.

It has been said, that philosophers are answerable, not for the consequences, but only for the truth of their tenets; and, that if a doctrine be true, its being attended with disagreeable consequences will not render it false. We readily acquiesce in this remark; but we imagine it cannot be meant of any truth but what is certain and incontrovertible. No genuine truth did ever of itself produce effects inconsistent with real utility. But many principles pass for truth, which are far from deserving that honourable appellation. Some give it to all doctrines which have been defended with subtlety, and which, whether seriously believed, or not, have never been logically confuted. But to affirm that all such doctrines are certainly true, would argue the most contemptible ignorance of human language, and human nature. It is therefore absurd to say, that the bad consequences of admitting such doctrines ought not to be urged as arguments against them.—Now, there are many persons in the world, of most respectable understanding, who would be extremely averse to acknowledge that the doctrine of necessity has ever been demonstrated beyond all possibility of doubt. I may, therefore be permitted to consider it as a controvertible tenet, and to expose the absurdities and dangerous consequences with which the belief of it may, and must be attended.

Mr. HUME endeavours to raise a prejudice against this method of refutation. He probably foresaw, that the tendency of his principles would be urged as an argument against them; and being somewhat apprehensive of the consequences, as well he might, he insinuates, that all such reasoning is no better than personal invective. “There is no method of reasoning,” says he, “more common, and yet more blameable, than in philosophical debates to endeavour the refutation of any hypothesis,

by a pretence of its dangerous consequences to religion and morality. When any opinion leads into absurdities, it is certainly false ; but it is not certain that an opinion is false, because it is of dangerous consequence. Such topics, therefore, ought entirely to be forborne, as serving nothing to the discovery of truth, but only to make the person of an antagonist odious." If your philosophy be such, that its consequences cannot be unfolded, without rendering your person odious, pray, Mr. HUME, who is to blame ? you, who contrive, and publish it, or I, who criticise upon it ? There is a kind of philosophy so salutary in its effects, as to endear the person of the author, to every good man ; why is not yours of this kind ? If it is not, as you yourself seem to apprehend, do you think that I ought to applaud your principles, or suffer them to pass unexamined, even though I am certain of their pernicious tendency ? or that, out of respect to your person, I ought not to put others on their guard against them. Surely you cannot be so blinded by self-admiration, as to think it the duty of any man to sacrifice the interest of mankind to your interest, or rather to your reputation as a metaphysical writer. If you think so, I must take the liberty to differ from your judgment in this, as in many other matters.

Nor can I agree to what our author says of this method of reasoning, that it tends nothing to the discovery of truth. Does not every thing tend to the discovery of truth that disposes men to think for themselves, and to consider opinions with attention, before they adopt them ? And have not many well-meaning persons rashly adopted a plausible opinion on the supposition of its being harmless, who, if they had been aware of its bad tendency, would have proceeded with more caution, and made a better use of their understanding ?

This is truly a notable expedient for determining controversy in favour of licentious theories. An author publishes a book, in which there are many doctrines fatal to human happiness, and subversive of human society. If, from a regard to truth, and to mankind, we endeavour to expose them in their proper colours, and, by displaying their dangerous and absurd consequences, to deter men from rashly adopting them without examination ; our adversary immediately exclaims, " This is not fair reasoning : this is personal invective." Were the sentiments of the public to be regulated by this exclamation, licentious writers might do what mischief they pleased, and no man durst appear

in opposition, without being hooted at for want of breeding. It is happy for us, that the law is not to be brow-beaten by insinuations of this kind, otherwise we should hear some folks exclaim against it every day, as one of the most ungenerous things in the world. And truly they would have reason; for it cannot be denied, that an indictment at the old Bailey has much the air of a personal invective; and banishment, or burning in the hand, amounts nearly to a personal assault; nay, both have often this express end, to make the person of the criminal odious: and yet, in his judgment, perhaps, there was no great harm in picking a pocket of a handkerchief, value thirteen pence, provided it was done with a good grace. Let not the majesty of the science be offended by this allusion; I mean not to argue from it, for it is not quite similar to the case in hand. That those men act the part of good citizens, who endeavour to overturn the plainest principles of human knowledge, and to subvert the foundations of all religion, I am far from thinking; but I would be extremely sorry to see any other weapons employed against them than those of reason and ridicule, chastised by decency and truth. Other weapons this cause requires not; nay in this cause, all other weapons would do more harm than good. And let it still be remembered, that the object of our strictures is not men, but books; and that these incur our censure, not because they bear certain names, but because they contain certain principles.

Some of the fatalists are willing to reconcile their system with our natural notions of moral good and evil; but all they have been able to do is, to remove the difficulty a step or two farther off. But the most considerable of that party are not solicitous to render these points consistent. If they can establish necessity, they leave natural religion to shift for itself. Mr. HUME, in particular, affirms, that on his principles it is impossible for natural reason to vindicate the character of the Deity. Had this author been possessed of one grain of that modesty which he recommends in the conclusion of his Essay; had he thought it worth his while to sacrifice a little pittance of ignominious applause to the happiness of human kind; he would have shuddered at the thought of inculcating a doctrine which he knew to be irreconcileable with this great first principle of religion; and of which, therefore, he must have known, that it tended to over-

turn the only durable foundation of human society and human happiness.

The asserters of human liberty have always maintained, that to believe all actions and intentions necessary, is the same thing as to believe that man is not an accountable being, or, in other words, not a moral agent. And indeed this notion is natural to every person who has the courage to trust his own experience, without seeking to puzzle plain matter of fact with verbal distinctions and metaphysical refinement. But, it is said, the sense of moral beauty and turpitude still remains with us, even after we are convinced that all actions and intentions are necessary ; that this sense maketh us moral agents ; and therefore, that our moral agency is perfectly consistent with our necessary agency. But this is nothing to the purpose ; it is putting us off with mere words. For what is moral agency, and what is implied in it ? This at least must be implied in it, that we ought to do some things and not to do others. But if every intention and action of my life is fixed by eternal laws, which I can neither elude nor alter, it is as absurd to say, to me, You ought to be honest to-morrow, as to say, You ought to stop the motion of the planets to-morrow. Unless some events depend upon my determination, *ought*, and *ought not*, have no meaning when applied to me. Moral agency further implies that we are accountable for our conduct ; and that if we do what we ought not to do, we deserve blame and punishment. My conscience tells me, that I am accountable for those actions only that are in my power ; and neither blames nor approves, in myself or in others, that conduct which is the effect, not of choice, but of necessity. Convince me that all my actions are equally necessary, and you silence my conscience forever ; or, at least, prove it to be a fallacious and impertinent monitor : you will then convince me that all circumspection is unnecessary, and all remorse absurd. And is it a matter of little moment, whether I believe my moral feelings authentic and true, or equivocal and fallacious ? Can any principle be of more fatal consequence to me, or to society, than to believe, that the dictates of conscience are false, unreasonable, or insignificant ? Yet this is one certain effect of my becoming a fatalist, or even sceptical in regard to moral liberty.

I observe that when a man's understanding begins to be so far perverted by debauchery, as to make him imagine his crimes unavoidable, from that moment he begins to think them inno-

cent, and deems it a sufficient apology, that, in respect of them, he is no longer a free, but a necessary agent. The drunkard pleads his constitution, the blasphemer urges the invincible force of habit, and the sensualist would have us believe, that his appetites are too strong to be resisted. Suppose all men so far perverted as to argue in the same manner with regard to crimes of every kind ;—then it is certain, that all men would be equally disposed to think all crimes innocent. And what would be the consequence ? Licentiousness, misery, and desolation, irremediable and universal. If God intended that men should be happy, and that the human race should continue for many generations, he certainly intended also that men should believe themselves free, moral, and accountable creatures.

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## BIOGRAPHY.

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### MEMOIR OF MR. GEORGE SHADFORD.

(Continued from page 95.)

HAVING preached occasionally for part of two years in the Epworth Circuit, and been a great blessing to many, he was, at the Bristol Conference, in the year 1768, appointed to labour in the west of Cornwall. “ This (saith he,) was a good year to me. I often wondered how the people could bear with my weakness ; but the Lord owned his poor servant, and gave me to see the fruit of my labours. I was one day in great danger of losing my life the first time I crossed Hale ; but two men, at a distance, suddenly called aloud, bidding me stop and come back. Had I gone a few yards further, myself and horse must have been inevitably swallowed up in a quicksand. I felt thankful, and went on admiring the watchful providence of God, my gracious and almighty Deliverer.”

Mr. S. laboured the following year in Kent, where he was exercised with various trials ; but in the midst of them all he was powerfully supported, and had the great happiness of seeing several sinners brought to a saving acquaintance with God. In 1770, he was sent to Norwich, and appointed to be what was then termed the Assistant, but since the death of Mr. Wesley, the

Superintendent. On account of the mean opinion which he formed of his piety and talents, his appointment to that important office greatly exercised his mind. During his stay at Norwich, a revival took place, in the course of which several experienced the renewing and comforting influences of the Holy Spirit.

"After staying (saith Mr. Shadford,) two years at Norwich, I went to the Leeds Conference, where I first saw Captain Webb. When he warmly exhorted the preachers to go to America, I felt my spirit stirred within me to go ; more especially when I understood that many hundreds of precious souls were perishing through lack of knowledge, scattered up and down in various parts of the woods, and had none to warn them of their danger. When I considered that we had in England many men of grace and gifts far superior to mine, but few seemed to offer themselves willingly, I then saw my call more clearly. Accordingly, Mr. R. and I offered ourselves to go the spring following, when I received a letter from Mr. W. informing me that I was to embark with Captain Webb at Bristol."

In censuring a superstitious attention to dreams, it is going to an unwarrantable length, to assert that none of them are of a divine nature. Surely the Father of spirits can instruct by "visions in the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men ;" and that he frequently does so, we have indubitable evidence. What proper judge and lover of truth, however much opposed to superstition, can possibly imagine that the following dream was the product of "either" a "multitude of business," or the effect of thought driven at random ?

"When I arrived at Pill, (saith Mr. S.) where the ship lay, an awful dream, which I had six years before, was brought to my mind. I thought in my sleep I received a letter from God, which I opened and read, the substance of which was as follows : 'You must go to preach the gospel in a foreign land, unto a fallen people, a mixture of nations.' I thought I was conveyed to the place where the ship lay, in which I was to embark, in an instant. The wharf and ship appeared as plain to me as if I had been awake. I replied, 'Lord, I am willing to go in thy name ; but I am afraid a people of different nations and languages will not understand me.' An answer to this was given, 'Fear not, for I am with thee.' I awoke, awfully impressed with the presence of God upon my mind, and was really full of divine

love ; and a relish of it remained upon my spirit for many days. I could not tell what this meant, and revolved these things in my mind for a long time. But when I came to Pill, and saw the ship and wharf, then all came fresh to my mind. I said to brother R. this is the ship, the place, and the wharf, which I saw in my dream six years ago. All these things were the means of strengthening and confirming me that my way was of God."

On Good Friday, Mr. Shadford and the companion of his voyage, set sail for America ; and after a comfortable voyage of eight weeks, they arrived safe at Philadelphia, where they were kindly received by a hospitable and loving people. In a few days after their arrival, Mr. S. crossed the river Delaware, and went to Trenton, where, in the course of a month, he added thirty-five to the Society, many of whom experienced much divine consolation.

In his tour through the Jerseys, he had an opportunity of conversing with Mr. John Brainard, brother to the justly celebrated missionary, Mr. David Brainard. " We conversed (saith Mr. S.) about two hours very profitably, about his brother David, and the Indians he had the care of ; about Methodism and inward religion. He heartily wished us good luck, and said he believed the Lord had sent us upon the Continent to revive inward religion amongst them."

Mr. Shadford's next remove was to New-York, where he spent four months, with great satisfaction. He went to that city with fear and trembling ; being much cast down, from a sense of his unworthiness, and inability to preach to the edification of so polished and sensible a people. But his God, whom he found to be better to him than his boding fears had suggested, made him the instrument of a blessed revival there. During his short stay at New-York, fifty members were added to the society ; several backsliders were restored to their first love ; and an earnest desire was excited in many believers for all the mind that was in Christ.

Mr. S. gives a very pleasing account of the Society at Philadelphia, in which many, during his stay there, were turned from the evil of their ways. When he was about leaving that city, the following remarkable circumstance happened, an account of which will be given in his own words.

“ When I went, saith he, to the inn where my horse was, and had just entered into the yard, I observed a man fixing his eyes upon me, and looking earnestly until he seemed ashamed, and blushed very much. At length he came up to me and abruptly said, ‘ Sir, I saw you in a dream last night. When I saw your back as you came into the yard I thought it was you ; but now that I see your face, I am sure that you are the person. I have been wandering up and down until now, seeking you.’ Saw me in a dream, said I, what do you mean ? ‘ Sir, said he, I did, I am sure I did : and yet I never saw you with my bodily eyes before. Yesterday in the afternoon I left this city and went as far Schuylkill river, intending to cross it, but began to be uneasy, and could not go over it ; I therefore returned to this place, and last night, in my sleep, saw you stand before me ; when a person from another world bade me seek for you until I found you, and said you would tell me what I must do to be saved. He said also that one particular mark by which I might know you was, that you preached in the streets and lanes of the city.’ Having spoken this, he immediately asked, ‘ Pray Sir, are not you a minister ?’ I said, ‘ Yes, I am a preacher of the gospel ; and it is true that I preach in the streets and lanes of the city, which no other preacher in Philadelphia does. I preach also every Sunday morning at nine o’clock in Newmarket.’ I then asked him to step across the way to a friend’s house, where I asked him from whence he came. He answered, ‘ From the Jerseys.’ I asked whether he had any family ; he said, ‘ Yes, a wife and children.’ I asked where he was going ; he said, ‘ he did not know.’ I likewise asked, Does your wife know where you are ; he said, ‘ No ; the only reason why I left home was, I had been very uneasy and unhappy for half a year past, and could rest no longer, but came to Philadelphia.’

“ I replied, ‘ I first advise you to go back to your wife and children, and take care of them, by obeying God in the order of his providence. It is unnatural, said I, to leave them in this manner : for even the birds of the air provide for their young. Secondly, you say you are unhappy ; therefore the thing you want is religion ; the love of God, and of all mankind ; righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. When this takes possession of your heart, so as to destroy your evil tempers, and root out the love of the world, anger, pride, self-will, and unbelief, then you will be happy. The way to obtain this is, you

must forsake all your sins, and heartily believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. When you return to the Jerseys, go to hear the Methodist preachers constantly, and pray to the Lord to bless the word ; and if you heartily embrace it, you will become a happy man."

"While I was exhorting him, tears ran plentifully from his eyes. We then kneeled down to pray, and I was enabled to plead and intercede with much earnestness for his soul. When we arose from our knees, I shook him by the hand : he wept much, and had a broken heart ; but did not know how to part with me. He then set out to go to his wife in the Jerseys, and I saw him no more ; but I trust I shall meet him in heaven."

In this plain, unadorned account, we have another proof that God, by dreams, sometimes deigns to instruct men in the path of duty.

Soon after this, Mr. S. went to Baltimore, where a young man came to him with two horses, and intreated him to go with him to his father's house, to visit his distressed brother who was chained in bed, and supposed to be either mad, or possessed of a devil. When he entered the room, he found the young man in the depth of despair. He told him that Christ died for sinners ; that he came to seek and to save lost sinners ; yea, that he received the chief of sinners ; and added, "There is no other name given under heaven whereby men can be saved, but in and through our Lord Jesus Christ." The young man laid hold on those words, "The name of Jesus Christ ;" and said he would call upon Jesus Christ as long as he lived ; and he found some little hope ; but knew no more how he must be saved than an Indian.

Mr. Shadford sung a part of a hymn, and then the father and mother of the young man joined him in prayer. The power of God was present ; and, saith Mr. S. "We had melted hearts, and weeping eyes, and indeed there was a shower of tears amongst us. I know not when I felt more of the divine presence, or power to wrestle with God than I did at this time.—After we rose from our knees, I gave an exhortation. They loosed the young man that was bound ; and the Lord shortly after loosed him from the chains of his sins, and set him at perfect liberty. He soon began to warn his neighbours, and to exhort sinners to flee from the wrath to come ; and before I left the country, he began to travel in a circuit ; and was remarka-

bly successful. I followed him in Kent in Delaware; and verily believe that he was instrumental in awakening a hundred sinners that year."

The next year, Mr. S. was appointed for Virginia, where, for some time, he was much dejected in spirit. He says that he saw himself so vile and worthless as he could not express; and that he wondered God should employ him in his work. *Before honour is humility*; and hence, after Mr. Shadford had been deeply humbled, such success attended his labours in Virginia, that he seldom preached a sermon without some being convinced or converted, and often three or four at a time.

The singular case of one of the converts in Virginia deserves particular notice; nor can it be better represented than in Mr. Shadford's own words. "Among these (the new converts) was a dancing-master, who came first to hear on a week day, dressed in scarlet; and came several miles again on Sunday dressed in green. After preaching he spoke to me, and asked, if I could come to that part where he lived some day in the week? I told him I could not, as I was engaged every day. I saw him again at preaching that week, and another man of his profession. When I was going to preach one morning, a friend said to me, 'Mr. Shadford, you spoiled a fine dancing-master last week. He was so cut under preaching, and feels such a load of sin upon his conscience, that he moves very heavily; nay, he cannot shake his heels at all. He had a profitable school; but hath given it up, and is determined to dance no more. He intends now to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic.' I said it is very well, what is his name? He said, 'he is called *Madcap*!' I said, 'a very proper name for a dancing-master; but I found this was only a nick-name, for his real name was Metcalf. He began to teach school, joined our society, found the guilt and load of his sin removed from his conscience, and the pardoning love of God shed abroad in his heart. He lived six or seven years after, and died a great witness for God, having been one of the most devoted men in our connexion.'

(To be concluded in the next.)

## SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATED.

## THE DARKNESS AT OUR SAVIOUR'S CRUCIFIXION, SUPERNATURAL.

*From Ferguson's Astronomical Lectures.*

FROM the account given of the nature of eclipses, it plainly appears that the sun can never be eclipsed in a natural way, but at the time of new moon, nor the moon, but when she is full; and that when the sun is totally eclipsed, the darkness can never continue above five minutes at any place of the earth.

But the three Evangelists, St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, mention a darkness that continued three hours, at the time of our Saviour's crucifixion. If their account of that darkness had been false, it would have been contradicted by many who were then present; especially as they were great enemies both to Christ and his few disciples, as well as to the doctrine he taught. But as none of the Jews have contradicted the Evangelists' account of this most extraordinary phenomenon, it is plain, that their account of it is true. Besides, the Evangelists must have known full well, that it could not be their interest to palm such a lie upon mankind; which, when detected, must have gone a great way towards destroying the credibility of all the rest of the account they gave of the Life, Actions, and Doctrine of their Master: And instead of forwarding the belief of Christianity, it would have been a blow at the very root thereof. We do not find that they have bestowed any panegyric on the life and actions of Christ, or thrown out an invective against his cruel persecutors; but, in the most plain, simple, and artless manner, have told us what their senses convinced them were matters of fact: So that we have as good reason to believe that there was such darkness, as we have to believe that Christ was then upon earth: and that he was, has never been contradicted even by the Jews themselves.

But there are other accounts of Christ, besides those which the Evangelists have left us. It is expressly affirmed by the Roman historians, Tacitus and Suetonius, that there was a general expectation spread all over the Eastern nations, that out of Judea should arise a person who should be governor of the world.—

That there lived in Judea, at the time which the gospel relates, such a person as Jesus of Nazareth, is acknowledged by all authors both Jewish and Pagan, who have written since that time. The star that appeared at his birth, and the journey of the Chaldean wise men, is mentioned by Chalcidius the Platonist. Herod's causing the children in Bethlehem to be slain, and a reflexion upon him, on that occasion, by the Emperor Augustus, is related by Macrobius. Many of the miracles that Jesus wrought, particularly his healing the lame, and curing the blind, and casting out devils, are owned by these inveterate and implacable enemies of Christianity, Celsus and Julian, and the authors of the Jewish Talmud. That the power of the heathen gods ceased, after the coming of Christ, is acknowledged by Porphyry, who attributed it to their being angry at the setting up of the Christian Religion, which he calls impious and profane. The crucifixion of Christ under Pontius Pilate, is related by Tacitus, and the earthquake and miraculous darkness attending it, were recorded in the public Roman Registers, commonly appealed to by the first Christian writers, as what could not be denied by the adversaries themselves ; and are in a particular manner attested by Phlegon, the *freed man* of Adrian.

Some people have said, that the above-mentioned darkness might have been occasioned by a natural eclipse of the sun ; and consequently, that there was nothing miraculous in it. If this had been the case, it is plain that our Saviour must have been crucified at the time of new moon. But then in a natural way, the darkness could not possibly have continued for more than five minutes ; whereas, to have made it continue for three hours, the moon's motion in her orbit must have been stopped for three hours, and the earth's motion on its axis must have been stopped as long too. And then, if the power of gravitation had not been suspended during all that time, the moon would have fallen a great way towards the earth. So that nothing less than a triple miracle must have been wrought to have caused such a long continued darkness by the interposition of the moon between the sun and any part of the earth : which shews that they who make such a supposition, are entirely ignorant of the nature of eclipses. But there could be no natural or regular eclipse of the sun on the day of Christ's crucifixion ; as the moon was full on that day, and consequently in the side of the heavens oppo-

site to the sun. And therefore, the darkness at the time of his *crucifixion* was quite *supernatural*.

The Israelites reckoned their months by the course of the moon, and their years, (after they left Egypt,) by the revolution of the sun, computed from the equal day and night in Spring to the like time again. For we find they were told by the Almighty, (Exod. xii. 2,) that the month Abib (or Nisan,) should be to them the first month of the year. This was the month in which they were delivered from their Egyptian bondage, and includes part of March, and part of April in our way of reckoning.

In several places of the Old Testament, we find that the Israelites were strictly commanded to kill the Paschal Lamb in the evening, (or, as it is in the Hebrew, between the evenings) of the fourteenth day of the first month: and Josephus expressly says, "The passover was kept on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, according to the moon, when the sun was in *Aries*." And the sun always enters the sign *Aries*, when the day and night are equal in the spring season.

They began each month on the first day of the moon's being visible, which could not be in less than twenty-four hours after the time of her change; and the moon is full on the fifteenth day reckoned from the time of change. Hence, the fourteenth day of the month, according to the Israelites' way of reckoning, was the day of full moon, which makes it plain that the passover was always kept on a full moon day; and at the time of the full moon *next after* the equal day and night in the spring; or when the sun was in *Aries*.

All the four Evangelists assure us, that our Saviour was crucified at the time of the passover: And hence it is plain, that the crucifixion was at the time of *full moon*, when it was impossible that the moon could hide the sun from any part of the earth. St. John tells us, that Christ was crucified on the day that the passover was to be eaten; and we likewise find, that some remonstrated against his being crucified "on the feast-day, lest it should cause an uproar among the people."

## THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD DISPLAYED.

## ORIGIN AND PROPAGATION OF LIGHT, ACCORDING TO MOSES.

*From a periodical work published in 1783.*

**GENESIS 1. 1,—5.** “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form and void ; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light : And there was light. And God saw the light that it was good : And God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night : And the evening and the morning were the first day.”

IT is reasonable to suppose, that when God created the heavens and the earth he gave existence to all the several elements which now compose this world, and all the other systems that are connected therewith. What is termed chaos or the abyss, seems to have consisted of all the various principles of matter which were at first without order, or particular arrangement. The Hebrew word **וְ**, in this part of the writings of Moses, signifies, to give being to what before was non-existent : **וְ** seems to point out the forming of specifical creatures into their particular classes ; and **וְ** to denote the making all things perfect in their kind.

The first distinct creature that Moses takes notice of, is Light ; which, he informs us, was created by the commandment of the Almighty. “He spake, and it was done ; He commanded, and it stood fast.” We have reason to conclude, from Scripture, that the visible fabric of the heavens and the earth was not the first work of God ; for the angels, those sons of the Almighty, those morning stars, sang for joy, when the foundations of this system were laid. It is altogether uncertain how long that spiritual system had stood before this world was created ; but it is highly probable, and almost certain, that there was a spiritual system before this world was formed in the manner it now is.

It appears very probable that all the moving powers in nature received their existence when the matter, of which the heavens and the earth are made, was first created. This is called by Moses the abyss, or matter without form or order, and void or empty, without utility. When the Almighty said, 'Let there be light,' we are not to imagine that this command was the cause of the creation of the principles of light ; the materials were already created, but it called them into another form than that in which they were before. The chaotic mass contained the principles and materials of all bodies, but without order. So Moses tells us that all things were *tohu ve bohu*,—*confusion and emptiness*, and that darkness was over all the abyss.

The divine commandment which produced light, must be considered as operating upon the properties of matter already created ; and as light is found to proceed from the motion of luminous particles, we must conceive some central force, or attracting power to be the instrument of producing this phenomenon of light. There seem to be moving principles in all nature, which, when put in motion by the first cause, produce natural effects according to fixed and established laws ; which cannot be altered unless by the First Mover.

The origin of that light which now renders bodies visible to us, seems chiefly to be fire ; though light and fire are not inseparably connected ; for light may be propagated where there is no fire, as from putrid bodies, and fire may be where there is no light, as in iron, sulphur, &c.

According to Moses, Light was the first specifical creature that was formed in this system, but the materials were already created when the other matter, of which the heavens and the earth were formed, received its existence. Moses seems plainly to hint at the operation of a principle in the universe, which, as a second cause, produced the phenomenon of light. This, most probably, was the motion of the luminous and fiery particles in the chaotic mass, which, at the divine command, separated themselves from the other gross materials of the miscellaneous composition, and by an attractive sympathy associated in one body, and after three natural days, formed that body which we now call the Sun.

Whether there be any subtle body, of a purer nature than fire, in this system, is of little consequence in this enquiry ; for, admitting that similar particles have, according to their nature, a

quality, or power to attract one another when put in motion, it answers all the purposes required. The first thing that Moses takes notice of in the order of the things created, is the centre of this system, which he calls *וְ*, or light ; and which after a short progression rested in the sun, the common centre of this system of which we are a part. And by the influence of this central light, or fire, the various parts of the system were balanced, and, by mutual attraction, moved in the expanse, at determined distances.

The account which Moses gives of the abyss, or deep, as it is called in our translation, is very favourable to the idea which Sir Isaac Newton has suggested concerning Attraction and Gravitation ; for the Hebrew word signifies, to move with a sort of confused motion. This shews that the chaotic mass had some gravitating powers in it, before the forming of the system ; and that the attracting and repelling forces were naturally and originally in the universe ; and that the first mover gave them, in a regular course, their specical direction, and systematical attractions. Thus it is imagined that the doctrine of Moses, even in point of philosophy, is much more agreeable to the system of Sir Isaac Newton, than that of Mr. Hutchinson ; and it does not appear that there is any thing said by Moses that contradicts our great natural Philosopher, or that there is any thing advanced by the latter, that is not consistent with the *Principia* of Moses.

As light is a fluid composed of lucid particles, of which many are of an igneous nature, and have the power of burning, and others give light without having any fire in their composition ; these all act according to their different attractions, or gravitation. When lucid igneous particles are strongly attracted to one another in great quantities, their heat becomes intolerable, and is capable of destroying the most solid bodies. It is well known that the rays of light converged in the focus of one of Hartsoeker's burning-glasses, will produce wonderful effects : tin, lead, or any soft metal, will dissolve at the first touch ; and iron, which endures a very strong fire before it dissolves, will melt before one of these glasses in a minute's time. This plainly shews us that, provided there were not a wise and almighty Providence, that manages and directs all things, those materials which are of the greatest advantage to the world, would soon destroy it. If the rays of light were to form solid bodies and

depart from their state of fluidity, they would, in the twinkling of an eye, reduce this globe to ashes, or render it liquid fire.

Were the rays of light all of one kind, it is probable that they might unite and become solid bodies; but the wisdom of Providence hath formed them both of different colours, and of different reflections and refrangibility. This prevents them from associating in such a manner as to do hurt, unless they are converged by some instrument which hinders them from flying off. As all rays of light have not the same degree of reflexivity and refrangibility, but some are capable of greater reflexions and refractions than others, they cannot without force be united in one solid body, though they are all serviceable for the purposes of light, and contribute to the happiness of men, and the welfare of all living creatures. Whether Moses intended a philosophical account of light in this chapter, I will not pretend to say; but one thing is certain, that he makes use of a word which points out some of the principal properties of light. **光**, signifies that body which renders objects visible, which we call light; it also signifies fire, and perhaps Moses intended to point out in one word, what in our language requires two, light and fire. Whatever may be the philosophic differences between these two, we are certain that they are seldom separated. It is also plain that the sun is not the sole source of light any more than he is of fire; for light may be propagated where the sun never shines, as may be proved by many instances: but the sun is the principal source of light to our system.

There has been a violent dispute between the philosophers on the Continent and those in England, concerning the propagation of light. The former make light a fluid of a most subtle, fine, and active substance, dispersed over all the world, which affects our eyes, when it is carried towards them by the impression of a body on fire.\* The latter affirm that corporeal light is a substance which the body in fire emits out of itself with the utmost rapidity. Sir Isaac Newton has demonstrated this latter opinion, by so many wonderful experiments, that it is impossible to deny the propagation of light, without being devoted to scepticism. The author of Spectacle de la Nature has endeavoured to shew, "that as there is no body in all the creation more useful than light, so there are none of more extraordinary qualities, and

\*History of the Heavens.

more wonderful in their qualities. In the rays of light are discovered all the original colours in nature, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet: and the quantity of colour in light is in the same proportion as the seven musical notes, or intervals of sound in an octave.\* From experiments it is found that those rays of light are of the largest quantity that paint the brightest colours; and of all these, the red rays have the least refrangibility. Light is in itself wonderful; but its use to the world is beyond all expression: It discovers to man and beast innumerable objects of pleasure, as well as the means of life.—Without it, motion would be dangerous, and rest insipid. True are the words of the Hebrew philosopher, “Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun.”

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### THE GRACE OF GOD MANIFESTED.

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#### AN ACCOUNT OF THE CONVERSION AND DEATH OF SARAH TOMLINSON OF STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT.

*Written by her Sister.*

SARAH TOMLINSON was a person fond of the world, and prospered in her pursuits; and appeared to be satisfied with worldly enjoyments, until arrested by sickness: then finding that she must die, and that she had no satisfactory evidence of an interest in Christ, she was constrained to seek, until she found the pearl of great price. In the year 1808, on hearing a sermon from 2 Tim. ii. 19, the words of which were forcibly applied to her conscience, she was convinced that the Lord knew her not *as his own*, and was pungently convicted for sin. But on hearing the word again, and attending class meeting, she was blessed with a sense of pardoning love.

Though she afterwards had many inward conflicts of mind, she could not doubt the divine favour, the Spirit of God bearing witness with her spirit that she was born of him:—This was often her expression, “I cannot give up my hold, though much tempted to doubt and fear.”

\*Sir Isaac Newton's Optics, Book I. Part II. Prob. III.

In the year 1811, in the month of October, she was brought near death, by a long and painful fever, in which she retained her reason, and had clear views of her acceptance, through Jesus, her mediator, which dispelled her fears of death; which were extremely great in her unrenewed state.

She so far recovered her health in the spring, as to attend meetings; but in November following, she gradually declined in health, and was apprehensive of an approaching dissolution. In this state she was distressed in mind on account of the small improvements she had made in the preceding year, which deprived her of rest or comfort for three or four weeks: in which time prayer was made for her, and by her, until the Lord saw fit to strengthen her mind, and enable her to speak his praise.—She confessed herself to have been a great sinner, and was sensible of the mercy of God in humbling her to go with those she had formerly so much despised. She warned others not to persecute religion as she had done. She strove to impress the necessity of conversion by assuring them that if they should experience it they would as sensibly know it as that they were refreshed by receiving food. She advised them to ask the Lord to do this for them, referring them to the third chapter of John, from the first to the nineteenth verse.

When she appeared to be near death, she dwelt much on these words, “yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” She said that she as sensibly felt the comfort and support of the staff, as the smart of the rod. The ninety-first Psalm, fourteenth and fifteenth verses, gave her much comfort. She spake in love to all that came in, requesting them to seek the Lord while in health, assuring them that a death-bed was no place to enter upon the work of their salvation, but a time to want the comfort of religion. She wished to encourage all in seeking, by telling them that “if the Lord had ever *past by* one, he surely would have *past by* me.” When prayer was made with her, she appeared to be greatly quickened, and exclaimed, “Precious Jesus! bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.” After this she so far recovered, as to sit up several hours in the day, though there was no prospect of a long continuance in life. In this situation she frequently said that she felt like a little child, and that the Lord’s will was her will. On hearing it said that she possessed much

patience, her reply was, "I fear sinning, and am surrounded with mercies of every kind, while my Saviour was denied them, and drank the gall and vinegar for me in his last agonies." In this languid state she manifested much humility, and convinced all that she possessed a Christian spirit. Her countenance and manners were very solemn, which expressed the sense she had of eternity. She repeatedly said, "What a great thing it is to die: my sisters fail not to meet me in heaven, which will augment my happiness there." Her daily expression was "I lean on the Lord, and have no will of my own." She highly esteemed praying friends, and when two or three were present, wanted a little prayer-meeting, that she might be as happy as she previously had been—she joined in singing these words, to which she was very partial :

"Jesus sought me, when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He to rescue me from danger,  
Interpos'd his precious blood."

On the first of March, her disease assumed such an ascendancy over her that it impaired her reason so much that she knew but little, except by intervals; which time she improved to warn others of the consequences of sin, and said that she was brought to this, to see herself. When asked if she wished for prayer, she said yes; it will be profitable to others if not attended to by me. On the twenty-second of the month it was observed to her that a great alteration had taken place—she replied, "It is death." Soon after this her sister asked her if she still felt the presence of the Lord? at which she smiled and clasped her hands, saying, *yes, O yes!*"

The next day, when visited by a friend who prayed with her, she roused from her lethargy into a rapture of joy, from a sense of the presence of the Lord, which lasted while her reason continued. The day following, when visited by a friend who thought her too far spent to pray with her, she knew him, and requested it: She was so enlivened in prayer, that while her lips were stiff with death, she smiled, (looking at each one in the room) and faintly, though with great vehemence, said, "make it your business to get to heaven." After this, when told that she was almost gone, she said, "I know it;" and without being moved with fear, breathed shorter and shorter, until she ceased without a struggle, at three o'clock in the morning, on the twenty-fourth day of March.

**RELIGIOUS AND MISSIONARY INTELLIGENCE.**

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**A SHORT SKETCH OF THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE CITY  
OF TROY, A. D. 1816.**

AT the annual Conference held in Albany, 1815, I was appointed to labour in Troy, where I arrived with my family, May 25, 1815. At this time the state of religion was rather low here.

Sometime in the month of February following, the Lord began to revive his work among us. Among the first instances of conversion that occurred was that of a young man, who in one of our prayer-meetings said he believed God had converted his soul the day past. That in the morning he was making some unfriendly observations to a young woman of the family where he boarded, who exhorted him to seek the Lord. He set out for the shop, (being a journeyman saddler) but the exhortation fastened conviction on his mind. He stopped in the street, and said within himself, Why should I labour, as long as my soul is exposed to hell? He repaired immediately to a wood about a mile distant, resolved never to return until he found mercy.—Here he continued nearly all the day, sometimes on his knees; sometimes walking, and sometimes prostrate before the Lord, until he found peace. This account was somewhat extraordinary: but the circumstances attending it, and the manner of his relation, left not a doubt of the reality of the work.

At our *fourth* quarterly Meeting, which was held February 25th, an unusual number of serious persons were admitted into Love-feast. It was a precious time. At the close of which we invited such as were determined to seek the Lord, to come forward to the altar, that intercession might be made for them at the throne of grace. Upwards of thirty persons came forward, and kneeled around the altar, for whom earnest prayer was made. Several of whom not long after found peace.

From this time the work spread in different families. The different congregations began to be crowded and solemn. The prayer-meetings, especially, were much attended. Weeping and sighing, were heard in all parts of the assembly. No private rooms could be obtained sufficiently large to contain the

people. We found it necessary to resort to our meeting-house, to hold our prayer-meetings; and for two or three weeks, almost every evening the lower seats of our church were filled, and there was scarcely a meeting but one or more were either awakened or converted to God.

In the Baptist congregation the case was very similar. No rooms were large enough to hold the multitudes which attended their evening conferences. They also repaired to their church, where every evening in the week, for some time, was devoted to converse on the things of God, joined with singing and supplication. In the former part of the revival they seemed to take the lead of the other denominations. At their first baptismal occasion, thirty-eight persons were baptized, in the presence of such a concourse of people as perhaps no occasion had ever called out in this place before.

Great attention was also among the Presbyterians. Their congregation was crowded, their meetings were solemn; their conferences or prayer-meetings, were frequent and profitable.

This great and good work embraced people of various descriptions: both rich and poor, masters and servants, aged and young; from children of eight or ten years old, to the hoary head of eighty-four. One instance at least, of the latter occurred. A Mr. W——n, an old gentleman, a constant attendant of our meeting, was powerfully awakened one sabbath. The next Tuesday I called to see him, and found him despairing of mercy; "*Because,*" said he with eyes full of tears, "*I have sinned so long.*" I called on him several times afterward. The last time I visited him, I found him in a very comfortable state of mind, verily believing he had found the Lord. His soul was filled with gratitude, while his trembling voice pronounced accents of praise to God, whose stupendous mercy had reached his seemingly desperate case. He joined the Presbyterian church, and in a few weeks departed this life in peaceful triumph.

I believe there were but a few instances of awakening under the preaching of the word. The Lord seemed to shew *us* he could work without *us*. Many were awakened in their minds at home, while about their work: others, perhaps, while walking the streets. But the greatest number were awakened in the praying, or conference meetings.

I might here detail many circumstances which took place, but I forbear. I would, however, observe that great union prevailed.

among the different denominations throughout the whole revival. There was but very little persecution ; owing partly to the genius of the people ; but principally to the influence of the divine Spirit, which seemed for awhile to awe the most abandoned sinners.

The remarkable outpouring continued for the space of seven or eight weeks ; during which time I believe the number added to the different churches was as follows :

To the Baptists,	58
To the Presbyterians,	98
To the Methodists,	107

And through the ensuing summer, many more were added to the different churches, several of whom were fruits of the revival.

Upwards of a year has elapsed, since this good work commenced, and but few as yet have turned back, at least of those who have joined us. With the state of the other churches I am not particularly acquainted. When I consider how many of the subjects of this work were young people ; the many temptations to which they are exposed in a place like Troy ; and how few have turned back ; I am compelled to say, " It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

I left Troy in June 1817, having laboured there two years ; in which time, in the two societies, Troy and Lansingburgh, both being included in the station, we received on probation two hundred and seventeen, of which only seventeen have been dropped. During which time three have died, four were expelled, one withdrew, and forty-one have removed to other societies. Leaving a nett increase of one hundred and fifty members. I exceedingly rejoice in hope of meeting, at least, the largest part of these in the kingdom above.

T. SPICER.

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EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM THE REV. S. G. ROSZEL.

*To the Editors of the Methodist Magazine.*

*Baltimore, February 16, 1818.*

I THINK it a duty I owe to God, the church, and the world, to forward to you an account of the late revival of the work of God in this city, to be published in our Magazine.

In the month of September brother Davis, who was stationed at Fell's-Point, and who had for some time religiously observed each Friday as a day of fasting and prayer, proposed in one of his love-feasts that all who would keep each Friday as a day of fasting and prayer, should meet together in the church, and spend an hour or more in solemn worship. A number of the members at once came into the measure, and sacredly regarded the day as an occasion of dedicating themselves more fully to God. The happy effects of this were soon realized in those who assembled together. They were instructed by their pastor in particular, to pray for a revival of religion in their own souls, in their families, classes, and congregations. With encouraging appearances among themselves, they went on in this good work, until about the commencement of the new-year, when it pleased almighty God to shew them that their prayers were heard, and that they should not eat their morsel alone; but that their neighbours should be brought in to share with them the rich repast, and taste the wonders of redeeming love.

An enquiry was waked up among the unrenewed, to know what they should do to be saved: the keenest conviction seized their minds, and they began to turn to the testimonies of the Lord. This pleasing change in individuals was only as the refreshing drops before a plentiful and glorious shower. In a few weeks the congregation became uncommonly crowded. Solemnity sat on every countenance, and all felt more or less, the mighty power of God. Conviction so powerfully seized the minds of many, that they evidenced their determination to be on the Lord's side, by pressing through the crowd to the altar, that through the instruction and prayers of the pious, they might be assisted to put their trust in God, and find redemption in the blood of the Lamb. They found it not in vain; but, in many instances, returned from the sacred spot, giving glory to God, in possession of an evidence of sins forgiven. In the course of six or seven weeks, five hundred whites, and nearly an hundred coloured persons, have, in that charge, been added to the church of Christ.

About the time, or shortly after the appointment of brother Davis to keep Friday as a day of fasting and prayer, I went with my family on a visit to Virginia, and was absent about three weeks. On my return, myself and colleagues moved on in town in the usual way; and for several weeks considered our

prospects rather discouraging; as the evening congregations appeared, from some cause, to decline. New-year's eve we held a Watch-night in all our houses of worship, which was owned of God: several were awakened and converted to God. Our prospects became encouraging—The congregations began to increase, and the work of God powerfully commenced in all our houses. Penitents began to press through the crowd to the altar, crying for mercy, and in earnest prayer seeking the Lord. Thus encouraged, and still longing to see greater displays of the power of God in the conversion of sinners, and sanctification of believers, we appointed, for all who would religiously observe Friday as a day of fasting and prayer, to meet in our churches, alternately, and join in humiliation, confession, and earnest supplication to God, to revive his work more gloriously among us. Hundreds gladly joined; and we have regularly met on each Friday in one of our churches, and our gracious Lord has been with us. The members are of one heart and soul, praying for the religion of Jesus to revive in their own souls; in their families, classes, congregations, city, and throughout the world.—The work continues to go on, and I think is increasing. Our congregations are crowded, to exceed any thing I ever saw, except on some special appointment. I have seen more than an hundred, (some suppose nearly double that number) in distress at a meeting: our altars crowded, and all through the churches, above and below, sinners crying for mercy. We were soon blessed to see the work spread as fire through dry stubble. Our prayer meetings were so visited of God that the private houses could not contain the numbers that assembled to join in addressing a throne of grace, and we were under the necessity of opening the churches for them. The church on the Point has been opened, and generally filled almost every night for five or six weeks; and the church in Old Town has for the last two weeks been opened almost every night, and hundreds attend; and I believe there have been but few, if any meetings, but what more or less have been converted to God.

Our class-meetings surpass any thing I have ever known. In some cases, after the leader has closed by prayer, the members continue for a considerable time on their knees, praying for a present and full salvation from sin. In one case, a class that meets at three o'clock, p. m. did not close until ten o'clock in the evening. Some who had come to the meeting in distress,

were crying for mercy ; some shouting glory to God for pardoning grace, and others earnestly seeking to be filled with all the fulness of God. In another case, the leader was obliged to desist from speaking to the members, and attend to those who, under conviction for sin, had come to his class.

Private families are also graciously visited of God. In one, between midnight and day-break, the cry for mercy was heard in the garret, which soon called the family together. They joined in humble addresses to the throne of grace, and before the material sun arose to chase away the darkness of night, the Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings, and brought salvation to the diseased, sin-sick soul.

The abodes of human degradation and woe, have been visited by an all gracious God. The heavenly fire has been kindled up in the Penitentiary.—A number of the criminals profess to know God in the pardon of their sins. More than fifty came forward, on Sabbath, the 8th inst. after preaching at the institution, professing a determination to seek religion, and desiring religious instruction. I have thought it improper in their situation to admit them into society, but have requested our local brethren who preach to them, to give them all the religious instruction in their power, by speaking to them individually, and by this means to search them to the bottom ; and to desire the keeper to have, at all times, a watchful eye over them. I rejoice that the ministry of the Methodists is owned of God in the redemption of these sons and daughters of human wretchedness.

I have never known so general an enquiry waked up among the people. Doctor Roberts observed to me a few days since, that during his residence in this city, he had never known any thing like it : that in his professional duties he was frequently called out in the night to almost every part of the city ; that he frequently fell in with persons in passing the streets, who knew nothing of him, nor he of them ; and that he found the topic of their conversation generally to be the revival of the work of God among the Methodists. Such have been the displays of divine power, that in four weeks past, we have received, in the town, between three and four hundred white people into the church ; and still the work is going on. It is thought that last Sabbath night exceeded any thing we have had since the revival commenced among us.

It is a little remarkable that there has been less extravagance in the work, and less opposition to it from those without, than I ever knew in any revival. Both the members, and those under distress, appear to know well what they are about. There is less of *man* and more of *God* in this revival, than I have ever known.

The subjects of this work are persons from twelve, to eighty or ninety years of age. Many heads of families, of respectable standing, and a great number of young men and women of good families and promising in their appearances are of the number: and in some instances, sinners of the deepest die have witnessed that Christ could save the chief of sinners. Grace is as much displayed in the redemption of the vilest of the vile, as in the salvation of those who have walked in the more refined and honourable paths of life.

In the commencement and progress of this great and blessed work, the plain truths of the gospel have been declared and enforced. The corruptions of human nature have been exposed—the universal atonement has been exhibited—the infinite sufficiency and willingness of Jesus Christ to save every child of man, have been declared; and on this ground *all* have been invited to take the water of life freely. The nature, and necessity of repentance, justification by faith, regeneration, and all the branches of experimental and practical godliness, and especially that holiness of heart, without which no man can see the Lord, have taken precedence in all our public and private ministrations; and blessed be God, the labour has not been in vain: Zion has shaken herself, and travails mightily in spirit. The wicked themselves can but notice the very great change that has taken place among us since the commencement of the revival. On Fell's-Point, where our ears used to be assailed with oaths and imprecations, you will now scarcely hear an improper word. The Sabbath, instead of being spent, (as in many instances it formerly was) in rioting, is regarded generally as a day of religious solemnity, and thousands flock to the house of God, to join in his holy worship.

In some cases, the work has been progressive, in others, instantaneous. Some have drank the wormwood and the gall of repentance for weeks before they found peace. Others have in a few hours found redemption in Jesus, the forgiveness of their sins. God works in his own way; to him may all the glory be given.

If there is a revival of the work of God in other churches, to any considerable extent, I know nothing of it. I did hear that a few had been converted in the Rev. Mr. Henshaw's congregation ; but for the truth of this I cannot vouch. I have not heard of any revival, in any other instance, among the other churches.

S. G. ROSZEL.

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POETRY.

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HOPE IN GOD.

By MRS. ROBERT MILLER.

*"Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?" Psalm xlii.*

WHY heaves my breast with this de-  
sponding sigh?

Why, O my sinking spirit, thus dis-  
trest?

Art thou not form'd to seek thy native  
sky,

And not in this frail tenement to rest?

Why art thou thus cast down? Resign  
thy load,

Throw off thy needless fears, and *Hope*  
*in God.*

His out-stretch'd arm, from earliest  
ages bared,

To save them, was his people's sure  
defence;

His willing ear their supplications  
heard,

In all their cares they drew their  
succour thence;

His tender love from everlasting flow'd,  
And fix'd the surest base of *Hope in*  
*God.*

The ancient Patriarchs, by this in-  
spir'd,

Disdain'd to feel earth's transitory  
pain;

To prove their faith, this test their  
Lord requir'd,

And earthly loss they found eternal  
gain;

Lest the vain good this varying world  
bestow'd,

And found their *changless help* was  
*Hope in God.*

This arm'd the suffering saints of for-  
mer days,

With dauntless breast to brave the  
tyrant's wrath;

From ling'ring tortures drew the note  
of praise,

And wing'd with heavenly joy their  
latest breath;

While angels round the exalted mar-  
tyrs stood,

In death's last moments whispering,  
*Hope in God.*

This rais'd the royal mourner's droop-  
ing breast,

O'er sorrow's gloom diffused a cheer-  
ing ray;

When complicated woes his heart op-  
prest,

He sought his burthen'd spirit thus  
to stay,

"Why sinks my soul beneath the af-  
flictive rod,

Disquieted within me? *Hope in God.*"

When press'd with condemnation's  
guilty power,

The trembling sinner feels its gall-  
ing chain;

Sees hell's dire jaws just opening to  
devour,

While in himself nor help nor pow-  
er remain,

Mercy flies swift, and through the aton-  
ing blood,

Invites his grief-worn soul to *Hope in*  
*God.*

If faith and peace have still'd the throb-  
bing smart,  
And gently heal'd conviction's gall-  
ing wound,  
Whilst ling'ring in the half-regenerate  
heart,  
The rankling wounds of in-bred sin  
are found,  
Let not thy soul o'er this in sorrows  
brood,  
But join with ceaseless prayer firm  
*Hope in God.*

Should fierce temptation press thy con-  
scious, breast,  
With flaming darts thy firmest faith  
assail ;  
Unshaken stand secure the fiery test,  
And dare in Jesu's name the rage of  
hell ;  
The balm to heal is a Redeemer's blood,  
The powerful shield to conquer, *Hope  
in God.*

But if the wily tempter's hellish force,  
The fearful feeble-minded soul dis-  
may,  
While yielding to its dire impetuous  
course,  
O'erwhelm'd he sinks amid the doubt-  
ful day,  
Yet breathe one sigh, pour one repen-  
tant flood,  
And peace again shall dawn, with *Hope  
in God.*

When all-prevailing pain this frame  
invades,  
Unstrings the nervous arm, the sin-  
ews shakes ;  
While at its touch, whate'er its pow-  
er pervades,  
With agonizing consciousness a-  
wakes ;  
Fearless resigned to its tyranic rod,  
Cast faith's triumphant glance, and  
*Hope in God.*

If disappointment in the smiling morn,  
Deceitful dash the cup of joy away ;  
Learn each delight beneath the skies  
to scorn,  
Each earthly bliss, that knows but  
to betray,  
Distrust the treach'rous smile of world-  
ly good,  
And put thy soul's unshaken *Hope in  
God.*

When friends forsake thee in the ad-  
verse hour,  
Who smil'd eternal truth in happier  
days :  
Shrink not beneath contempt's malig-  
nant power,  
Though human friendship shed its  
latest rays ;  
If humbly thou sustain the chastening  
rod,  
With childlike resignation *Hope in  
God.*

In youth's temptations, in its thousand  
snares,  
When danger lurks in each alluring  
path,  
And opening life its transient sweets  
prepares ;  
With humble zeal pursue the way of  
faith,  
And keep thy feet in heavenly virtue's  
road  
With watchful prayer, and ceaseless  
*Hope in God.*

When the deceitful dream of time is  
o'er,  
And feeble age stands tottering on  
the verge  
Of vast eternity's tremendous shore,  
Where soon the immortal spirit must  
emerge,  
Celestial light shall gild the dreary  
road,  
To him who holds secure his *Hope in  
God.*

## ERATTA.

No. III. p. 112. l. 7 for *want* read *wait*. p. 115. 2d line of  
the extract of Mr. Campbell's letter to Mr. Blackburn, for *min-  
isterious* read *meritorious*.